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Report Highlights:

There are indications that consumer opposition to genetically modified (GMO) food has been decreasing in Sweden. The vast majority still demand, however, that such products be labeled to allow for consumer choice. The following is a translation of a press release put out by Konsumentföreningen Stockholm, the largest consumer organization in Sweden.

There are indications that consumer opposition to genetically modified (GMO) food has been decreasing in Sweden. The vast majority still demand, however, that such products be labeled to allow for consumer choice. The following is a translation of a press release put out by Konsumentföreningen Stockholm, the largest consumer organization in Sweden:

The consumers in Stockholm, Sweden are less worried today about genetically modified food and its effect on human health and the environment than they were three years ago.

This was shown in a survey conducted among members of Konsumentföreningen Stockholm (The Consumer Organization of Stockholm). The organization has 500,000 members, which comprise about half of all households in the region of Stockholm. The survey, which was done through phone interviews in early September this year, was conducted by Skandinavisk Opinion (SKOP) and ordered by Konsumentföreningen Stockholm (Kfs). The purpose was to survey members' current attitudes towards genetically modified foods compared to 1998 when a similar survey was conducted. (The figures within parentheses represent the 1998 percentages.)

The survey shows that:

- **S** 60 percent of those surveyed are concerned about health and environmental effects of genetically modified foods (compared to 80 percent in 1998).
- **S** 69 percent (83) can probably or absolutely not see themselves buying genetically modified foods.
- S 17 percent (6) believe that it is very or fairly positive to genetically modify crops while 27 percent (15) had no opinion.
- Producing food for individuals with food allergies (e.g., those who are lactose or gluten intolerant) is the most widely accepted purpose for genetically modifying food. 73 percent (45) think that this is important, as long as it is done in a way that does not put people or the environment at risk. 70 percent (36) think that using gene technology is important if the application leads to decreasing the use of hazardous chemicals in farming. Only 18 percent think that GMOs should be used to prolong the shelf life of fruits.
- S Just as many today as before, 95 percent believe that it is important that foodstuffs which have been produced using gene technology should be labeled specifying that. 60% believe that meat from animals which have been fed genetically modified feed should be labeled specifying that (new question).
- Information regarding gene technology and food provided by scientists, universities and colleges has gained credence. 80 percent (63) of those surveyed have faith in the information from these sources. The public also has great faith in information provided by Naturskyddsföreningen (an environmental organization), consumer interest organizations and government departments. Only 17 percent

- (8) of those interviewed had faith in information provided by politicians.
- **S** Fewer consumers believe that they have enough knowledge about the subject, 20 percent compared to 45 in 1998.

"The survey shows that a majority of the consumers are still skeptical towards genetically modified crops and food, but that more are positive today than earlier," Louise Ungerth, head of consumer issues at Konsumentföreningen Stockholm said. "The concern about the effects on health and the environment has also decreased. It is possible that todays' consumers know that [in the future] they will be able to choose whether or not they want GMO food. There will be information on a product if it contains GMO foodstuffs. To be able to choose in the store is important. That is something that consumer organizations in Sweden and internationally have demanded for quite some time, and now have been able to convince the EU about."

More information (in Swedish) on this survey can be found on the organizations website at http://www.konsumentforeningenstockholm.se.